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The Athenian Mercury.

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Queſt. 1. *WE read in the 3d of* Daniel, *That* Nebuchadnezzar *commanded all Nations to worſhip the* Golden Image; *and they that did not, were to be caſt into the* Fiery Furnace. Qu. *Whether* Daniel *did not worſhip the Image, and all the other* Jews?

Anſw. For the reſt of the *Jews*, it's eaſily ſolv'd, ſince they had nothing to do to be there, nor any of the common People, unleſs to gaze, as is uſual on ſuch Solemnities. This we learn from the 2d Verſe: "Nebu- "chadnezzar the King, ſent to gather together—— "the Princes, the Governours, the Captains, the Jud- "ges, the Treaſurers, the Counſellors, the Sheriffs, "and [all the Rulers of the Provinces] to come to "the Dedication of the Image which he had ſet up—— And accordingly they came, in the 3d Verſe, and worſhipped, in the 7th. And among thoſe *Rulers of Provinces*, it's probable, the Three Confeſſors were obliged to come; for it's ſaid, in the laſt Verſe of the 2d Chapter, that they were "ſet over the Affairs of the "Province of *Babylon*. For *Daniel*, the Difficulty ſeems greater; that he did not worſhip the glittering Monſter of an Idol, we may well conclude, from the inflexible Piety and Vertue which he ſhewed on all occaſions. But how then did he eſcape? Either by his Dexterity, he got himſelf employed about ſome other buſineſs; or elſe there were to be Two Adorations of this Image, perhaps Mattins and Even-ſong, it being not probable all the Great Men could be preſent at once, and he might be ſtill expected at that to come. Now that this Ceremony was to be twice, at leaſt, performed, ſeems pretty fairly deducible, from *Nebuchadnezzar*'s own words to *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, Verſe 15. "If ye be ready, that at what time ye hear "the ſound of the Cornet, &c. ye fall down, and "worſhip the Image. Well, and this was after the firſt Adoration. There's ſtill another ſolution, perhaps the moſt probable of all, That *Daniel* was ſo Great a Perſon, and the *Chaldeans* ſo much obliged to him, that they durſt not, or would not accuſe him. His Greatneſs we find, Chap. 2. v. 48. "The King "made him a Great Man, and gave him many great "Gifts, and made him Ruler over the whole Province "of *Babylon*, and Chief of the Governours over all the "*Wiſe Men* of *Babylon* (a ſort of a Chancellor to *their Univerſity.*) But yet *more* than this, *Ver.* 46. "The "King fell upon his Face, and *worſhipp'd Daniel*, and "commanded that they ſhould *offer* an Oblation, and "ſweet *Odours* unto him. *Daniel* was one of the King's Idols himſelf, and it ſeems hard to make one Idol *worſhip another*. Then, for their Obligation, *Daniel* had ſav'd the Lives of all theſe *Chaldeans*, but a little before; and 't had been moſt barbarous in them to have deſir'd his Death, though they did his Companions, out of Envy at their advancement. All theſe Solutions are, we think, probable, and neither contradicts the other.

Queſt. 2. *I'm a marry'd man, but having a very Ill Wife, have been parted from her ſome years, and deſign never to live with her more. Now I deſire your Advice, whether I may pray to God to take her to* himſelf, *that I may endeavour to make my ſelf happy in another.*

Anſw. Sure if ſhe's fit for Heaven, ſhe's fit for you; and if ſhe were as good while you liv'd with her as ſhe is now, how came you *to part?* But ſuppoſing *the cauſe* were ſufficient, and ſhe's grown never the better all this while, 'twould yet be handſomer to ſubmit to God's Will, and wait with patience, or rather pray that he'd convert her, than take her away in ſuch a condition.

Queſt. 3. *Whether the* Soul, *in the ſtate of* Separation, *ſhall ſee our Bleſſed Saviour in his* Glorified Humanity, *or not till* re-inveſted *with the* Body?

Anſw. We have had occaſion to examine this Point, if we miſtake not, more than once already, and have ſhewn the Opinion of the Ancients, concerning Martyrs being immediately admitted into Paradice. To which we muſt refer the Querift; only adding, That St. *Paul* is clear in the caſe, that when we *depart*, we ſhall be with *Chriſt*.

Queſt. 4. In the 6th of *Daniel*, A Decree was made, That none, for Thirty Days, ſhould ask any Petition of God, or Man, but of the King only, under pain of being caſt into the Den of Lyons; *and Verſe* 11. *Daniel* was found making ſupplication to his God. Qu. *Whether* Shadrach, Meſhach *and* Abednego *did not worſhip God thoſe Thirty days; if they did, how they eſcaped puniſhment?*

Anſw. They might be dead during the Reign of ſeveral Kings, from the firſt mention of them. If not, yet might eſcape here more eaſily than before, becauſe the chief Pick of the Preſidents was againſt *Daniel*, their Rival; and therefore they were ſo careful to *ſet* him, in order to bring him under the Laſh of the Law; beſides, that he might the more eaſily be diſcovered, becauſe of his generous behaviour, above Diſguiſe, or Fear, praying with his *Window open*, as formerly, towards *Jeruſalem*.

Queſt. 5. *When our Saviour was ſet on the* Pinacle *of the Temple*; Qu. *Whether he was viſible to the people, or no?*

Anſw. Where's the Concern, whether he was, or was not, ſince neither is affirmed in the Scripture? However, it ſeems moſt probable, that he was viſible, and that one part of the Devil's Temptation was to perſwade him to Vain-Glory, and the performance of an unneceſſary and unſeaſonable Miracle; As a Modern Poet has it, who introduces the *Tempter* thus accoſting him:

Flee from you Court, the Veſted Prieſts perceive,
Their Morning-Sacrifice unfiniſh'd leave.

And again:

Plunge hence, in ſight of all th' admiring Town,
And in the Altars Flames waft ſoftly down:
So ſhall the wondring World due Honour bring,
At once adore the God, and hail the King.

However, it ſeems not probable that the Pinacle of the Temple was on *Herod's Tower*, or the *Porch*; which, as the forementioned Author, in *Solomon's* Time, was One Hundred and Twenty Cubits high, and not leſs in *Herod's*; But rather, ſome of thoſe ſtately Galleries *Joſephus* mentions, whence the Prieſts were uſed to ſpeak to the people.

Queſt. 6. *Whether* St. James, *in the* 2d Chap. *and* 10*th Verſe, when he ſays,* "Whoſoever ſhall keep the "whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guil- "ty of all; *does not* condemn *the moſt* Righteous Perſon living, *of* violating *all the* Law, *which is all (excepting often* Repetition) *that can be Imputed to the worſt of men?*

Anſw. St. *Auſtin*, as he is quoted by the *Rhemiſts*, and others, explains it thus "That he which offends in "one, that is, againſt the General or great command- "ment of *Love* or *Charity*, which is in a manner all, as "being the ſumm of all the *plenitude* of the *Law*, and the

" the perfection of the reſt; he breaks, after a ſort, and " tranſgreſſes all; no ſin being committed but either " againſt the Love of God, or our Neighbour. To this may be added, that he who makes no Conſcience of breaking one Command, and living in the avow'd neglect of his Duty in any one Inſtance, it's evident that 'tis not out of Conſcience he obſerves other *Precepts* of the Divine Law, but from Cuſtom, Reputation, or ſuch like, and not keeping it from a good Principle, he's a Tranſgreſſor, as well as if he had more generally broken it, though it's true, not in ſo high a manner. Beſides, there's a Chain of Vertues, and he who breaks one Link, effectually diſſolves it. After all, it being certain, as the ſame Writer affirms, " That there's " none who doth good, and ſinneth not; and as certain, that he does not contradict himſelf, it muſt follow, that the *offending* here mention'd, muſt be a deliberate, habitual thing, and that of an high Nature, as is Haughtineſs and Uncharitableneſs towards a poor good man, how light ſoever it may be eſteemed, being the *very thing* here intended.

Queſt. 7. *How far by the ſtrength of Nature may a Chriſtian perform any good Act, relating to Soul or Body?*

Anſw. By the *ſtrength of Nature* we ſuppoſe the Queriſt intends the *Remainder of Uncorrupt Nature*, conſider'd as diſtinct from Divine Grace, or the aſſiſtance of Revealed Religion. And taking it in this ſenſe, he can do as much as an *Heathen*, and no more, becauſe all men are alike, till Chriſtianity makes the difference. Some of the *Heathens*, 'tis true, have done many handſome things, and ſpoke more; but then they were men of an Extraordinary Genius (their Commonalty being much more barbarouſly and profligately lewd than ours.) They had made many Improvements in Natural Knowledge, being men of ſtrong heads, and clear Reaſoning, and ſeem to have brought ſome part of it as high as it could go: They had ſome Syſtems of *Ethicks*, which were generally true and good; but they were not very forward in practiſing them, the moſt Vertuous Men we find among 'em, *Socrates*, *Cato*, *Seneca* and others, having ſome very foul Blots in their Lives. After all, 'twill be difficult to ſtate exactly what ſhare of a good Action performed by a Chriſtian, may be aſcrib'd to Nature, and what to an higher principle; as 'tis o' t'other ſide, when Evil Thoughts proceed from a man's own Mind, and when they are Injected by the Devil. Thus much is certain, that God let's Nature work as far as it will go, becauſe he does nothing in vain; but becauſe it can't go far enough, he muſt, and does aſſiſt it, ſo we mayn't be able precisely to define either the manner of his Opinion, or the meaſure of it. For Example, it's Natural for a man in diſtreſs to ſeek for aid, and that to the moſt powerful Helper; and the ſame Light of Nature directs him to God. But ſtill a Chriſtian owns, that without the aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, diſtinct from ours, becauſe working together with it, his Prayer will never be accepted: And yet, as before, we queſtion whether it be eaſie to fix the very preciſe degree, where one ends and the other begins. Tho this is ſufficient to ſatisfie and encourage us, that if we do our parts, God will not be wanting in his.

Queſt. 8. *Whether 'tis not the Product of* Original Sin, *for any man to lie under the Tyranny of ungoverned thoughts, I mean, ſuch as are confus'd and diſorder'd?*

Anſw. All actual ſin, as well as the misfortunes of Life, are undoubtedly the fatal effects of that firſt Tranſgreſſion, and among other weakneſſes, none more troubleſome and Uncomfortable to a good Man, than this of vain and wandring Thoughts, eſpecially in Holy Offices, as the contrary the greateſt Bleſſing, and the higheſt pleaſure that's to be had of this ſide the Stars, namely, to have a mind entirely bent and fixt on heavenly Objects. 'Tis true, the Fancy is ſo nimble a Faculty, and has ſo vaſt a Range, and the Soul it ſelf ſo active, (indeed *All* it ſelf) that 'tis very difficult, eſpecially for ſome Tempers to obtain ſuch a Maſtery of themſelves in theſe matters: But yet doubtleſs 'tis poſſible: The Conſideration of the Holineſs of Place, by the Preſence of God, and Dedication to him, will much conduce to this. Preparation before, and long conſtant ſtrugling with our fooliſh Thoughts, may at laſt produce an Habit of cloſe thinking, and more ſteddy Devotion.

Advertiſement.

☞ THE *WORKS* of the Right Honourable *Henry* late *Lord Delamer*, and Earl of *Warrington*, containing his *Lordſhips Advice to his Children, ſeveral Speeches in Parliament*, &c. with many other *Occaſional Diſcourſes* on the Affairs of the two laſt Reigns. Being 32 Original Manuſcripts Written with his Lordſhips own Hand; never before Printed. Printed for *John Lawrence* at the *Angel*, and *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*, *price bound* 5 *s.*

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☞ THE late *Mary Emmet* of *New-ſtreet*, in St *Brides*, *London*, now Wife of *Cornelius Jenkins*, of the ſame place, being lately gone away with a conſiderable Sum of Mony, with Plate, Watches, and other things of Value. She's about the Age of Twenty, of a middle Stature, full Gray Eyes, the Lids ſeemingly Sore, ſpeaks quick, has Red Hair, full Fore-head, round Viſage, with a Dimple in her Chin, and has lately gone by the Name of *Fowler*; whoever Diſcovers and ſecures her, and gives Notice to her Husband, before mentioned, ſhall immediately Receive three *Guineys* reward.

☞ *IN Grays-Inn-lane* in *Plow-yard*, the third Door, lives Dr. *Thomas Kirleus*, a Collegiate Phyſician, and Sworn Phyſician in Ordinary to King *Charles* the Second, until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Buſineſs) undertakes to cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Noſe, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leproſies, and Venerial Diſeaſe, expecting nothing until the Cure be finiſhed: Of the laſt he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and ſo deſtroys many. The Drink is 3 *s.* the Quart, the Pill 1 *s.* a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanſe the Body of all Impurities, which are the cauſes of Dropſies, Gouts, Scurvies, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. Take heed whom you truſt in Phyſick, for it's become a *common Cheat* to profeſs it. He gives his Opinion to all that write or come, for nothing.

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